



Glossary of Terms

Are you wondering what are the technical terms for playground equipment such as carousel, merry-goround, roundabouts or slides? This is a helpful resource that will help you better understand playground terms, which will come in handy when planning your own playground structure. Learn about what is on the playground, safety and regulation, the benefits of outside play all at one place.

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A

ADA:	ADA stands for American Disabilities Act. This civil rights law was enacted in 1990 to make all public areas accessible to people with disabilities. This includes schools, business, and yes, playgrounds.
ADA Accessible:	In order to be ADA Accessible, every area and feature of a structure must be usable by people in wheelchairs, and other differently abled people. This is the highest standard of ADA certification.
ADA Compliant:	ADA Compliance is basic adherence to the standards of the American Disabilities Act. ADA compliant structures take steps to make most of their features accessible to people of any physical ability.
Age Group:	Most playgrounds are created with a specific age range in mind. Playground designs take into account safety precautions, developmental learning stages, and accessibility for children of various ability levels.
Age Separation:	Many playgrounds have features specifically designed for specific age groups. Similarly, whole playscapes are suited toward children of particular ages.
Agility:	Agility is the ability to move quickly. It is a skill that is built up and improved through regular physical activity like running. Quick reflexes as well as rapid movements are needed for agility.
All inclusive playground:	An all-inclusive playground is a space featuring play structures, learning accessories, and other equipment designed to benefit children of all ability levels. All-inclusive playgrounds usually feature an assortment of ground-level activities accessible to children in wheelchairs.
ASTM:	ASTM stands for the American Society for Testing and Materials. Despite this name, their guidelines and standards for product safety are used around the world. Customers purchasing products can feel confident that what they are getting is safe, as long as it meets the ASTM criteria.
Availability:	Availability denotes the amount of product in stock and tells you how soon your order can be expected to arrive. If you have questions about an availability, be sure to call a representative and discuss the timeline of your order.

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Balance:	Balance is the ability to carefully distribute weight in order to keep something upright. There are a lot of different kinds of balance, and different ways to improve it through activities like balance beams.
Barrier:	A fence, railing, or enclosure around an elevated platform designed to prevent accidental falls or even jumps from the structure. Playgrounds designed to meet safety standards will include proper barriers.

Blow mold plastic:	Pieces of play structures composed from hollow plastic. Blow mold plastic is made by melting and injecting recycled plastic into a mold and letting it cool into the appropriate shape.
Border:	Usually surrounding safety surfacing, a border is a barrier outlining and containing the use zone of a playground. The implementation of a border can prolong the life of your impact absorbing surfacing and make your playground safer and more sustainable.
Brand:	The company that produces the product. A brand can also refer to a corporation's marketing and "identity" as conveyed through its products, mission, and communication.
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Carousel: (include merry-go-round and roundabout):	Featuring a wide seat or platform, carousels and merry-go-rounds involve a spinning surface area that moves around a central axis. Conservation of angular momentum keeps a well-oiled carousel spinning.
Climber:	A playground accessory that allows children to climb up into the playset and around the climbing web. Climber variations include climbing panels, ropes, metals, and nets.
Composite structure:	A combination of elevated components, such as slides, climbers and towers, linked together to create a large play structure. Composite structures are a wonderful way to cater to children of various ages, interests, and ability levels.
Coordination:	Coordination is the ability to move various body parts in unison. It is needed to perform complex tasks that involve precise and unified movements. The most well-known type of coordination, hand-eye coordination, involves being completely aware of the position of one's hand.
CPSC:	The Consumer Product Safety Commission, or the CPSC, creates safety guidelines for playground equipment. Many states require that playgrounds and recreation spaces comply with their guidelines to ensure adequate safety for children and playground goers.
CPSI:	Otherwise known as the Certified Playground Safety Inspector, the CPSI is a certification that can be obtained from the National Recreation and Park Association stating that an individual is qualified to determine a playground's safety level and act accordingly.
Critical Height:	Denotes the maximum fall height of playground equipment that would not result in a life-threatening head injury. Critical height is a crucial component to playground safety.
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Entanglement:	An incident in which a component of a child's clothing or jewelry gets caught on part of the playground equipment. Entanglement can result in discomfort or injury and can be avoided by adhering to proper playground safety and guidelines.
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Fall Height:	The distance between a play structure's highest point and the impact absorbing surfacing beneath the playset.
Fine motor skills:	Fine motor skills are small and precise bodily movements, usually performed with the hands and feet. These do not require much physical strength, but rather careful control over the exact movements.
Footing:	The way by which you anchor playground equipment to the ground. Proper footing ensures your playset stays in place, making it safe and secure.
Footprint:	The space that the playground equipment will cover. Often, this also refers to the area covered in mulch.

G

GaGa Ball:

GaGa Ball is an evolution of dodgeball, usually played in an octagonal pit in which players push a ball toward their opponents. In GaGa Ball, if a player gets hit below the knees, they're out! GaGa Ball is a safe, inclusive, and entertaining way to blow off steam.

Gross motor skills:

In contrast to fine motor skills, gross motor skills are larger and less precise bodily movements involving the arms, legs, or other large body parts. These tend to involve physical strength, as well as some amount of dexterity.

Guardrail:

A piece of equipment on an elevated playground platform designed to prevent falls and injury. Can be made of metal, plastic, or made of different materials.

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Imaginative or creative play:

While most playtime activities benefit kids' physical or social skills, imaginative or creative play benefits them by exercising their abilities to pretend. There are all kinds of ways for children to use their imaginations during playtime.

Impact absorbing surfacing (IAS):

Impact absorbing surfacing is another name for the mulch found on most playgrounds. Mulch comes in many varieties composed of different materials, including recycled rubber and engineered wood. Alternative surfacing includes sand and gravel.

Infill:

A protective barrier of material--vertical bars or solid panels--used between decks or platforms to prevent children from falling through. Infill is a vital component in playground safety. Loose Fill Surfacing: Protective surfacing in a use zone that consists of loose particles. Examples are sand, gravel, rubber mulch, or engineered wood mulch.

IPEMA:

IPEMA stands for the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association. They are a non-profit, membership, trade association for surfacing materials and play equipment. It was originally a group of playground equipment manufacturers that saw the need for a credible, effective third-party testing system for their products. The core values are to uphold consistency of compliance and demonstrate professionalism and integrity.

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Loose Fill Surfacing:

A protective and impact-absorbing surface material consisting of loose particles such as sand, gravel, engineered wood mulch, and recycled tire rubber.

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Mulch:

A protective playground surface that softens the blow in the event of trips or falls. Mulch comes in wood and recycled rubber varieties.

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Natural Playground:

Playgrounds and green spaces that incorporate natural materials like wood and water, eco-focused architectural elements, and vegetation to create a play space. Natural playgrounds are a wonderful way to integrate play into natural landscapes.

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Outdoor activity:

The name says it all. An outdoor activity is any game or action that takes place outside of buildings. These can be on the playground or out in nature, as long as it stimulates healthy minds and bodies.

Outdoor Game:

An outdoor game is any play activity that takes place outside of a house or building. Outdoor games can be played on the playground, in nature, on a sports field, or just about anywhere else.

Overhead ladder: A horizontal ladder suspended on four poles. Available in various heights as a stand alone accessory or part of a composite play structure. Commonly referred to as a set of "monkey bars."



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Playground: A space designed for children to play, explore, and just be kids. It may be indoors or outdoors and include playsets, interactive panels, and protective surfacing.

Playground equipment: Playsets, slides, swings, and interactive accessories, ideally made of kid-friendly materials like recycled plastic. Playground equipment usually features durable hardware and safety features.

Polyethylene: A common and hearty plastic used in several of our products. Weather-resistant and durable, it holds up to the elements and everyday use.

Powder coat paint: A kind of paint applied as a dry powder. It is then baked on for a long-lasting wear and even look.

Preschool Age Children: Refers to children ages two to five years old. Many educational panels and play structures are specifically designed for preschool-age children.

Protrusion: Refers to a piece of playground equipment that sticks out from the play structure.



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Rotational Mold Plastic: Plastic is injected into a heated, hollow mold and slowly rotated until it coats and fits the mold. The process led to the creation of plastic toys and is used in large playground accessories and interactive play panels.



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Safety Zone: The area around a play structure covered with impact-absorbing surfacing to break a child's fall. This area is designated for free circulation and play around the playscape.

School-Age Children: Usually refers to children ages five to twelve years old. Many playgrounds are designed specifically for children in this age group. Accessories might include climbers, slides, vertical ladders, and more.

Seesaw: Otherwise known as a teeter-totter, a see-saw consists of a long, narrow board anchored in the middle. One end goes up as the other goes down, and riders can kick off with their legs.

SKU: Also known as a Stock Keeping Unit, an SKU is the item number for a piece of equipment and helps ensure that you're ordering the correct product.

Slide: A slope running from the deck of a play structure, all the way to the ground. Slide variations include a straight slide, right-turn slide, bump wave slide, and tube slide.

Swing: A moving seat suspended from above via a metal or rope loop, hung on rods, which moves back and forth, entertaining the rider for hours. Swings come in many versions, including a classic park bench swing, early childhood T swing, child adaptive swing seats, and a bird's nest tripod swing.

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Tether Ball:

A game that requires fast reflexes, in tether ball, players hit a ball attached to a pole back and forth, attempting to wrap the rope around the pole. Usually involving two players, the game is finally won when someone hits the ball so that the rope is completely wrapped around the pole with the ball flat against it.

Tire Swing:

A swing made from an old tire. Children and riders sit in the middle of the used wheel. The safest tire swings feature a three-sided galvanized chain and hardware. Because of their range of motion, they require more space on a swing set in order to meet safety standards.

Toddlers:

Refers to children ages six to twenty-three months. Toddlers benefit immensely from playground equipment that helps grow their developmental and motor skills.

Tube slide:

A slide that's completely enclosed, forming a tunnel chute from the top of the play structure to the ground. Often features in playsets designed for children three years of age and older.

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Unit Size:

The dimensions of the piece of equipment. It's important to check the unit size with your playground or backyard use zone.

Use Zone:

The area under and around a play structure. This space is designated for mulch padding, unrestricted movement, and requires proper safety regulations.

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Weight:

The heaviness of a piece of equipment. Knowing a product's weight is important, especially if consumer assembly is required. In many instances, weight also determines shipping costs.

FAQ

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How did GaGa ball get its name?

In Hebrew, Ga means "hit." Many theorize that the game originated in Israel. It's believed that GaGa Ball deriving its name from the rule saying the ball must hit the ground two times before it's in play.

How does a seesaw work?

Essentially, a seesaw is a class-one lever that hinges on a pivot in the middle. Riders can take turns acting as the driving force of the load for maximum physics fun!

How does physical activity affect obesity?

Physical activity is the best way to help prevent and reduce obesity. It is an indispensable part of staying in shape and being healthy.

How does play benefit a child's development?

Play, especially active play, has numerous physical benefits for kids. These include increased balance, agility, and coordination, as well as the improvement of fine motor skills and gross motor skills. Playtime also benefits children's social skills. Playing with others involves cooperation with, and understanding peers. Through playing, children learn to make friends and work together.

How does play support children's cognitive development?

Play supports children's cognitive development in a number of ways. It gets them to think about activities and situations in new ways, which expands their perspective and reasoning.

Is there a difference between a seesaw and a teeter totter?

They're simply synonyms. However, teeter-totter is traditionally "American" phrase, while seesaw is common in Europe and elsewhere.

Playground equipment refers to play structures featuring a number of interactive accessories. Playground equipment can include slides and climbers, overhead ladders, tire swings, composite structures, educational panels, sandboxes, and creative play accessories, all of which enrich interactive play. Playgrounds can be either indoors or outdoors, and structures are often made of plastic, metal, and wood. Natural playgrounds tend to incorporate natural materials like wood and water, eco-focused architectural elements, and vegetation to create a play space. They're a wonderful way to integrate play into natural landscapes and/or historic settings. Equipment is anchored to the ground through Footing. Proper footing ensures your playset stays in place, making it safe and secure. Similarly, a footprint is the space that the playground equipment will cover. Often, this also refers to the area covered in mulch.

What are the playground equipment?

What is another name for a merry go round?

Another name for a merry-go-round is a carousel or a roundabout. All refer to a spinning platform or seat upon which children can rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise.

What is a GaGa ball pit?

A GaGa ball pit is an octagonal-shaped raised pit used for a safe version of dodgeball that's played in many schools and daycare facilities. Gaga ball pits ideally boast steel legs and durable walls, and can be either portable or permanent fixtures.

What is a playground slide made of?

Playground slides are fixtures in schools, parks, and daycare centers. Slides come in a variety of styles and are usually constructed from plastic or metal. Metal slides have a tendency to heat up in the sun and are slightly less safe than plastic slides. Many slides are composed of Blow Mold Plastic, which is made by melting and injecting recycled plastic into a mold and letting it cool into the appropriate shape. Another common slide material is Rotational Mold Plastic, a slide plastic that's created by injecting into a heated, hollow mold, and slowly rotated until it coats and fits the mold. Similarly, Polyethylene plastic is used in many slides. A typical and heart plastic, it's weather-resistant and durable and holds up to the elements and everyday use. And Powder Coat Paint is often a final step in the slide-creating process. It's applied as a dry powder and baked on for long-lasting wear and even appearance.

What is a playground made out of?

A playground is a designated space for kids to frolic, imagine, and explore, usually featuring play structures, slides, swings, and interactive panels. Playgrounds can be either indoors or outdoors and composed from a variety of materials like plastic, metal, and wood.

What is a playground merry go round called?

A playground merry-go-round may be referred to as a carousel and a roundabout. A merry-go-round features a spinning seat or platform, and can usually spin either clockwise or counter-clockwise.

What is an all inclusive playground?

An all-inclusive playground denotes a play space and structures where children of all ability levels can explore, play, and interact. Inclusive playgrounds act as a meeting space, rich in sensory play, for all children, regardless of their physical or developmental abilities.

What is an outdoor activity?

An outdoor activity is any game or exercise which is done outside. Sunlight and fresh air are usually healthy, which is why doing things outdoors can be very beneficial.

What is an outdoor game?

An outdoor game is any play activity that is done outside. Most games can be played outside, which makes them even healthier and more beneficial.

What is IPEMA certification?

An IPEMA certification is a mark of approval from the International Play Manufacturers Association. This organization determines what materials and building practices are safe for children. They have outlined a rigorous set of standards and guidelines which determine whether or not various products are acceptable for kids. These IPEMA certifications signify that a product is safe and high-quality, so that consumers can purchase with confidence.

What is the best type of mulch?

For playgrounds, rubber mulch is recommended because it's fantastic at padding falls or trips and more durable than wood-chip mulch. Plus, it's made from recycled materials, making it sustainable and environmentally friendly.

What is the difference between a carousel and a merry go round?

Essentially, a playground merry-go-round and carousel are the same thing. They both spin and provide the same function. A slide is a chute that runs from the top of play structure all the way the ground. Usually constructed of plastic, slide varieties include open straight slides, right-turn slides, bump wave slides, and fully-enclosed tube slides.

What is the function of play?

Play functions as a way to relieve stress and have fun while developing important skills and abilities. Playtime provides a wide range of physical, social, and emotional benefits.

What is the material used to make playground slides?

Playgrounds featuring commercial-grade structures can be made from a variety of materials, including plastic, metal, wood, or a combination of the different mediums. Plastic is recycled and molded into slides, climbers, and playground turrets, and comes in a wide range of aesthetically-pleasing colors. Safer than wood and metal, plastic is ideal for both indoor and outdoor playgrounds.

What is the name of the playground equipment that spins?

A merry-go-round, carousel, or roundabout are all synonyms for a piece of playground equipment that spins while riders hold onto handles atop a platform or individual seats.

What is the thing that spins at the playground?

A merry-go-round, otherwise known as a carousel or roundabout, is a spinning piece of play equipment featuring seats or a platform and handles. They come in a variety of styles and sizes, and are usually ideal for children ages two and up.

What is tire mulch?	Tire mulch is a type of playground or outdoor mulch created from recycled tires. Tire mulch extends the longevity of your playspace and provides a safe, durable padding in case of falls or trips.
What should be in a playground?	That's really dependent on your space's specific aesthetic and needs. However, it's wise to make your playground as inclusive as possible, so that it meets the needs of children of all ability levels.
Where did the name seesaw come from?	The name Seesaw comes from the up and down, teeter-totter movement of the classic play structure. The name denotes the playground equipment movement; a long and narrow board alternates up and down, while the center is anchored to provide stability.
Which way does a merry go round turn?	Usually, a merry-go-round spins (and keeps spinning) as someone pushes the moving platform. Conservation of angular momentum keeps it going. Sometimes, merry-go-rounds include pedals, and in that case, the kids riding the merry-go-round power the carousel.
Who invented the swing and when?	We're unsure about the original inventor of the swing. But they've been around for quite a long time. In fact, images of swings can be found in ancient art and were a fixture in public gymnasiums and recreational spaces. A familiar swing found on many playgrounds, tire swings, allows children and riders to sit in the middle of the used wheel. The safest tire swings feature a three-sided galvanized chain and hardware. Because of their range of motion, they require more space on a swing set to meet safety standards.
Why are outdoor activities important?	Outdoor activities are important because they are healthy, and help to teach children from an early age to appreciate nature. Children will see things outdoors that they will never encounter at home, which presents plenty of opportunities to learn.
Why is playing important in early childhood?	Playing is especially important for young children because of its crucial benefits to mental and social development. These are valuable skills that they will need throughout their lives. Imaginative or creative play help them understand new situations and explore new thought processes. On top of that, it's just good for them to have fun.
Why should we have recess?	Recess is important because kids need a certain amount of time to themselves to have fun and make new friends. Although it may not always seem like it, kids' lives can often be stressful, and an outlet to relieve that stress is vital.

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